

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION ON INVASIVE SPECIES
American Lands Alliance, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense, Environmental
Law Institute, Great Lakes United, International Center for Technology Assessment,
National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Union of Concerned Scientists

Position Statement: Improving Funding to Address Invasive Species

The Problem: Insufficient Funding to Address Invasive Species Concerns

Federal appropriations alone have not provided either adequate or sufficiently flexible funding to address growing problems. Long backlogs of needed but unfunded efforts are typical of federal land management agencies. For example, in 1998, efforts against invasive species cost the National Refuge System \$13 million. Today, the backlog of invasive species projects on refuges has increased to more than \$150 million. Likewise, the National Park Service cannot control invasive species on 93 percent of its affected lands. Problems are similarly widespread on private land and in the nation's waters. Control of just one Great Lakes invader, the sea lamprey, costs over \$12 million each year.

Allocating adequate funds for efforts to prevent invaders from arriving and establishing in the U.S. is a wise investment. Prioritizing funding for prevention is the most cost effective – and in some instances the only – window of opportunity to prevent their establishment. Rapid response programs to manage newly detected invasive species must also be one of our highest priorities. Yet funds for emergency actions are not promptly available to every agency that needs them. For instance, control and eradication funds are often needed at the end of the summer and early fall – just when land management agencies' appropriations are running low. Funding for research is also inadequate. The identification of potential new invaders, better knowledge of invasive species' life cycles, and a more thorough understanding of their impact would accelerate our capacity to both prevent and control invaders. Finally, funding for enforcement is also scarce even though stronger enforcement demonstrably enhances measures' effectiveness.

Recommendations:

Provide long-term commitments of resources to programs that are known to be efficient and effective. Examples include the program to control sea lampreys in the Great Lakes, the National Park Service's Exotic Plant Management Teams, federal research on exotic forest pests, and federal cost-sharing for states to implement their state-wide aquatic nuisance species management plans. Curtailing invasive species on lands and waters in the public trust should be a funding priority, followed by cost-sharing programs with other land and water managers.

(cont.)

Explore and implement ways to substantially increase or supplement government funding available to address all aspects of invasive species issues. Year-to-year appropriations do not facilitate action on a time span or scale necessary to overcome our growing invasive species problems. Other sources of funds for prevention; early detection and rapid response, control and management, research and monitoring, enforcement, and public outreach and education are needed.

Develop economic policy tools, such as incentives, to prevent harmful invasions and to control them when they occur. This could include implementation of a fee-based approach, such as has been used successfully in the past to create the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund and the California Ballast Water Management Program. We suggest that the National Invasive Species Council be charged with examining the full range of other possible funding options and report its findings within six months.